

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 13419 110900Z

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TAGS:PFOR, IN, BG
SUBJECT: FARAKKA: GOI STATEMENT ON FAILURE OF TALKS

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT (INTRODUCTORY
PARAGRAPH OMITTED) OF THE MEA SPOKESMAN ISSUED ON SEPT. 10
FOLLOWING THE UNSUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF INDO-BANGLADESH
TALKS ON THE SHARING OF THE GANGES WATERS:

A. "THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO
HOLD TALKS WITH AN OPEN MIND AND WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS WITH
A VIEW TO REACHING AN EQUITABLE AND AMICABLE SOLUTION TO THE
QUESTION OF THE UTILISATION OF THE GANGA WATERS AT FARAKKA
DURING THE LEAN SEASON THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAD
SINCERELY HOPED AND EXPECTED THAT THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION
WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PROPOSALS BOTH FOR THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM.

B. "INDIA HAS A CLEAR ENTITLEMENT TO A PREPONDERANT USE OF
THESE WATERS. HOWEVER, THE INDIAN DELEGATION MADE A FAR-
REACHING PROPOSAL OFFERING TO REDUCE THE WITHDRAWALS AT
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 13419 110900Z

FARAKKA DURING THE LEAN SEASON TO ACCOMMODATE BANGLADESH.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION SHOWED NO DISPOSITION EVEN TO CONSIDER ANY OF INDIA'S PROPOSALS. THEY INSISTED THAT PENDING A LONG-TERM SOLUTION, THE FLOW OF THE GANGA DURING DRY SEASON SHOULD BE RESTORED TO BANGLADESH; THIS WOULD IMPLY THAT THE FARAKKA BARRAGE SHOULD BE SHUT DOWN FOR YEARS TO COME.

C. "AS REGARDS A LONG-TERM SOLUTION, BANGLADESH AGAIN WAS NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER A JOINT STUDY OF ALL THE POSSIBILITIES PROPOSED BY EITHER SIDE, INCLUDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CANAL LINKING THE BRAHMAPUTRA WITH GANGA. CONTRARY TO THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES IN THE JOINT DECLARATION OF MAY 1974 TO SEEK A SOLUTION BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF OPTIMUM UTILISATION OF THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE REGION AVAILABLE TO THE TWO COUNTRIES, BANGLADESH INSISTS THAT AUGMENTATION OF THE FLOW SHOULD BE EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE GANGA ITSELF.

D. "INDIA'S SINCERE EFFORTS AND DESIRE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT IN A SPIRIT OF AMITY AND MUTUAL ACCOMMODATION EVOKED NO RESPONSE FROM BANGLADESH.

E. "INDEED, BANGLADESH PERSISTED IN ITS INFLEXIBLE POSITION. QUITE EVIDENTLY, BANGLADESH IS SEEKING TO INTERNATIONALISE THE ISSUE AT THE U., INSTEAD OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH INDIA THROUGH SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS AND IN GOOD FAITH."

2. ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS A PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER MEETINGS THE GOI SPOKESMAN TOLD THE PRESS THAT INDIA "WOULD ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SOLVING THIS QUESTION THROUGH BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS..." HE CASTIGATED THE BANGLADESH IS FOR HAVING TAKEN AN "INFLEXIBLE POSITION" AND FOR HAVING "NO INTEREST IN DISCUSSING THE PROPOSALS INDIA MAKES."

3. THE FAILURE OF THE TALKS AND THE GOI POSITION WERE PROMINENTLY CARRIED ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE DELHI DAILIES SEPTEMBER 11, BUT WITHOUT EDITORIALS.

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PAGE 03 NEW DE 13419 110900Z

4. THE PRESS ALSO ANNOUNCED WITHOUT COMMENT THE BEGINNING OF A SIX-DAY INDO-BANGLADESH BOUNDARY DEMARCATION CONFERENCE AT CALCUTTA SEPTEMBER 13. SURVEY OFFICERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES REPORTEDLY ARE TO DISCUSS THE JOINT PROGRAM TO BE UNDERTAKEN CONCERNING THE "PENDING PORTION OF THE BOUNDARY." SAXBE

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